

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMCONSUL CURACAO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2077

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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LIMDIS

FOR ARA/CAR JOHN BURKE - GEORGE HIGH; THE HAGUE - FOR THE
AMBASSADOR; CARACAS - FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: APER, SNAR, NA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED DEA STAFFING AND NEW OFFICE IN CURACAO

1. ALTHOUGH THE CONGEN HAS APPROACHED GNA FOR ITS VIEWS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEA OFFICE HERE AND A DECISION TO ESTABLISH THE OFFICE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN MADE IN WASHINGTON, SEVERAL ADDITIONAL FACTORS MUST BE CONSIDERED BEFORE ANY IRREVOCABLE DECISION IS MADE. SINCE PERMISSION HAS NOT YET BEEN SOUGHT FROM THE HAGUE, THERE IS SUFFICIENT TIME TO REFLECT ON LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING THE DECISION.

2. UNDOUBTEDLY THE NA POLICE WILL CONTINUE TO LEND THEIR FULL COOPERATION. IN THE PAST POLICE COMMISSIONER OLDENBOOM HAS BEEN EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO USG EFFORTS TOWARD DRUG ENFORCEMENT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE HE WILL BE LESS HELPFUL IN THE FUTURE. SINCE EXCELLENT COORDINATION ALREADY EXISTS, IT IS DOUBTFUL THE STATIONING OF DEA PERSONNEL ON CURACAO WILL HAVE MUCH POSITIVE EFFECT ON LOCAL POLICE RELATIONS.

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3. CURACAO HAS A POPULATION OF 140,000. PLACING OF DEA AGENTS

IN PERMANENT ASSIGNMENT HERE WILL IDENTIFY THEM AND DEPRIVE THEM AND THEIR ACTIONS OF ANY SECRECY. AN AGENT TEMPORARILY IN THE AREA CAN PASS AS A TOURIST; ONE WHO RESIDES HERE WILL BE QUICKLY IDENTIFIED AND HIS ACTIONS WILL BE WIDELY KNOWN. THIS MAY LIMIT HIS EFFECTIVENESS FOR OPERATIONAL MATTERS AND LESSEN HIS CHANCES OF GARNERING USEFUL INTELLIGENCE. IN THE PAST THE NA HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY SERVED BY AGENTS WHO ARE TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED, THUS DECREASING THEIR VISIBILITY AND ASSURING THEIR OPTIMUM USE WHERE AND WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED.

4. IN THIS TIME OF OVERBEARING INFLATION WHICH BRINGS CONSTANT ADMONITION FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO HOLD DOWN COSTS THE PLACING OF A SPECIAL OFFICE WITH THREE OR FOUR MORE U.S. PERSONNEL IN THE SMALL NA SIMPLY DOES NOT FIT THE PATTERN OF FRUGALITY; ESPECIALLY WHEN IT SEEMS THE JOB CAN PROBABLY BE MORE EFFECTIVELY DONE WITH TDY PERSONNEL.

5. THERE ARE SIX AMERICAN EMPLOYEES NOW AT THE CONGEN. THE ASSIGNMENT OF TWO AGENTS, A SECRETARY AND PROBABLY A COMMUNICATOR WOULD BE A 66.6 PERCENT INCREASE IN AMERICAN STAFF. IT IS A LONG-STANDING U.S. POLICY TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE IN THE NA. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE ON THE 1975 FISCAL AUTHORIZATION ACT AS REPORTED IN THE NOVEMBER 1974 NEWSLETTER, PAGE 11, IT WAS THE QTE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS UNQTE THAT THERE BE A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION OF OVERSEAS PERSONNEL OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH (OTHER THAN PERSONNEL OF STATE, USIA, CIA, DEFENSE AND PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS). THE SECRETARY IS TO SUBMIT A REPORT WITHIN SIX MONTHS ON STEPS TAKEN TO CARRY OUT THE QTE SENSE OF CONGRESS UNQTE SECTION. ADDING THREE AMERICANS (OR PROBABLY FOUR SINCE IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE RESULTING INCREASE IN TELEGRAPHIC TRAFFIC WILL REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATOR) TO A STAFF THAT NOW HAS ONLY SIX AMERICANS IS CONTRARY TO THE EXPLICIT QTE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS UNQTE RELATING TO AMERICAN STAFFING OVERSEAS.

6. WITH THE SMALL SIZE AND POPULATION OF THE NA AND THE RELATIVE VISIBILITY OF THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL, ALREADY THE LARGEST PJOFESSIONAL MISSION IN THE NA, IT WILL BE NO SECRET THAT DEA PERSONNEL HAVE ARRIVED. THERE IS NO OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE IN THE CONSULATE GENERAL; THEREFORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RENTING OUTSIDE OFFICE SPACE WILL MAKE THESE AGENTS EVEN MORE CONSPICUOUS.

7. TO PRECLUDE ADVERSE PUBLICITY AND ANY POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS SUCH AS ALLEGATIONS THAT AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IS ESTABLISHING A NETWORK IN THE NA, IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT DEA IS INDEED TO SET UP OFFICES IN CURACAO THE CONSUL GENERAL INTENDS TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE MATTER TO THE LOCAL PRESS.

WHILE THIS ACTION WILL REMOVE ANY VESTIGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY, LACK OF SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BRING ACCUSATIONS AND INNUENDOS IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS WHEN THE FACT OF A DEA OFFICE IS DISCOVERED -- WHICH WOULD BE VERY SOON. ATTEMPTS AT SECRECY COULD LEAD TO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GNA AND THE EXTREME LEFT-WING OPPOSITION WHICH WOULD SEIZE ANY CHANCE TO DISCREDIT THE GNA FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES. SUCH A MOVE COULD MEAN LESS FLEXIBILITY IN THE USG POSITION IN DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITION IF AND WHEN IT BECOMES PART OF A GOVERNING COALITION OR ACHIEVES A MAJORITY, AND IS NOT IN OUR BEST INTERESTS.

8. NO MENTION HAS BEEN MADE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS WHICH THE SUDDEN EXPANSION OF THE CONGEN STAFF WOULD ENTAIL SINCE THEY SHOULD BE TREATED SEPARATELY. SHOULD THE DECISION TO ALLOW DEA TO ESTABLISH ITS OFFICE ON CURACAO BE POSITIVE, THE CONGEN WILL CERTAINLY BEND EVERY EFFORT TO COOPERATE IN THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS MISSION. IT MUST BE MADE EMPHATICALLY CLEAR THAT THIS CONSULATE GENERAL WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ITS STRONGEST SUPPORT TO ALL DEA ACTIVITY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND IT IS NOT AGAINST ANY EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF DEA. BUT IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR AGAIN FOR THE RECORD AS WE HAVE TRIED TO DO HERE THAT WE HAVE CERTAIN STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE EFFICACY OF RESIDENT AGENTS IN THE NA. THIS IS A MOST DELICATE MATTER IN A TIME OF PROSPECTIVE CHANGE AND HEAVY POLITICAL INFIGHTING IN THE NA. THE STORE OF GOOD WILL THIS CONGEN HAS ENGENDERED OVER SO MANY YEARS HAS BEEN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE THROUGH ITS LOW PROFILE IN DEALING WITH THE GNA ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE TWO VERY IMPORTANT OIL REFINERIES ON ARUBA AND CURACAO, JOINT DEFENSE MATTERS WITH THE DUTCH NAVY, COOPERATION WITH U.S. IRS AGENTS ON MATTERS CONCERNING IMPORTANT OFFSHORE COMPANIES, PROTECTION OF U.S. CITIZENS AND PROPERTY AS WELL AS FULLEST COOPERATION IN THE DANGEROUS DRUGS PROGRAM. CAREFUL CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DESIRABILITY OF PLACING SUCH HIGHLY VISIBLE AND SOMETIMES CONTROVERSIAL PERSONNEL IN THIS LIMITED GALAXY OF SIX SMALL ISLANDS. SINCE ASSIGNMENT OF TEMPORARY PERSONNEL ON A BASIS OF NEED HAS SERVED THE USG PURPOSE WELL IN THE PAST, A CAREFUL, DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE DESIRABILITY OF CHANGING THIS PROCEDURE SHOULD BE MADE. THEN ONLY IF THERE IS SUFFICIENT OVERRIDING EVIDENCE THAT PLACEMENT OF A FULLTIME DEA OFFICE (WITH A STAFF PROBABLY OF FOUR) HERE WILL BE WORTH THE EFFORT AND OUTWEIGH THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT ON THE OVERALL U.S. POSTURE SHOULD SUCH ACTION BE CONTEMPLATED.

9. THIS IS A COUNTRY TEAM ASSESSMENT.
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